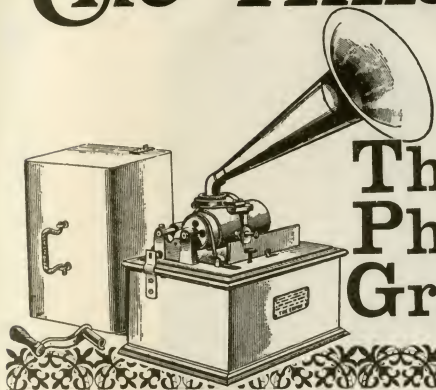


The Hillandale News



The official journal of the
**The City of London
Phonograph and
Gramophone Society**
inaugurated 1919

No. 57

October 1970



Lioret Phonograph belonging to D.G.Watson, Hereford.



Two cylinder storage cabinets described by Peter Bertz
in the article opposite.



The official journal of the CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY (inaugurated 1919)

No. 57

October 1970

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***** IMPORTANT *****

Members who attend London meetings are advised that beginning in October, the date of the monthly meeting is reverting to the second Tuesday, instead of the second Friday, as at present. The Annual General Meeting will therefore be held at the "White Swan" on tuesday October 13th, at 6.45pm. It is felt that many members will find that Tuesday will be more convenient.

PHONOGRAPH, DISC & CYLINDER.

by PETER BETZ

Cylinder Record Boxes, care and repair.

Sooner or later, you are bound to run across some of the various types of special boxes or cabinets made to hold cylinder records. These range from the small cardboard boxes holding a dozen records, or less, to the well-constructed oak and mahogany cabinets, which can

hold over 200, and there are also the suitcase types, lined with felt and built with the traveller in mind.

Most of these have paper pegs or spindles on which the records are placed, and these have often been knocked out by a previous owner who desired to use the holder as a regular box or suitcase after it had served as a record container. Even with all pegs removed, these cabinets or boxes are easy to spot because the base of the box, or the shelves of the cabinet invariably have visible circles where the pegs once fitted, and were glued to the base-board.

Repair is easy. Using the cardboard centres from inside toilet rolls, glue them as close as possible to the position of the original spindles. Use good hide or wood glue, allow sufficient drying-time, and you will find these new pegs are as rugged and secure as the originals. Purists will want to replace and number the spindle tops, a thing easily done by cutting out light cardboard circles and glueing them atop the spindles.

There are various types and sizes of boxes, suitcases and cabinets and one type of cabinet stands out as a rarity. This is the so-called 'barrel' cabinet. One variety features a rounded front which, when opened, exposes three trays which are fastened to it. Two more trays remain inside and can be pulled forward for easy access. This cabinet holds 120 cylinders. The author's is of high-grade oak, but has no manufacturer's name on it anywhere.

The second type shown in unrestored condition, is entirely round with a decorative support post in front. Shown open, one can see the two doors, with three shelves each, plus two inside the centre part. Both doors must be opened together, and this via a system of metal rods housed beneath the base of the main cabinet. Again, no maker's name is found, examination suggests both these record holders are from the same source. The doors are similarly constructed, and the feet are identical.

Since record-containers of suitcase, box and cabinet types discussed here are known to have been made for the large-diameter Concert cylinders, one must be also on the look-out for these. Any of these are most uncommon, as are the records which they were originally made to hold.

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

Some personal reflections by ALEC KIDD

A double portion of fatted calf was generously served on me when I returned to the fold on the occasion of the Society Meeting

of 10th July. I might have been away for a whole lifetime, so warm was the welcome from the President, Officers, and old friends.

After our worthy Chairman had re-introduced me to the assembly, and I had "taken a bow", I listened with joy to the opening remarks of Robin Hayden who was giving the programme for the evening, and I lost count of the number of times I was called upon to give comments on the records played. The whole occasion seemed to be one continuous spate of goodwill, and this continued unabated through the interval; the film-show that followed was most nostalgic, and the final selection of cylinders and Edison discs brought to an end a very happy evening.

As I wended my way homewards, I reflected upon the very kind words that had greeted me, George Frow pleasantly reminding me that I am a Senior Citizen of the City of London Society; then there was Robin Hayden introducing a song by Vesta Tilley with "wasn't Alex Kidd lucky, - he just walked into a shop and bought the cylinder over the counter?" Not that particular one, Robin, but a great many others were obtained in the days of my youth. Gramophone and phonograph shops abounded everywhere, and the customer was served with alacrity from stock.

If the title happened to be an unusual one, there might be a delay of a couple of days before it could be obtained. Such a delightful state of affairs seems almost impossible in the light of the procedure required nowadays. One just walked into a shop and a conversation would take place like this: "Have you any records by Harry Lauder, please?" "Yes, sir, I have his 'She's my Daisy' and 'I love a Lassie', and 'Stop your tickling, Jock'!" "How much are they?" "Edison records are a shilling each, sir" (This was before the days of Amberols) "I'll take 'She's my Daisy' and 'I love a Lassie', but I haven't quite enough cash for the third one". "Well sir, I have 'Stop your tickling, Jock' on Edison Bell, sung by Jay Laurier at ninepence". I heard the record, parted with two shillings and ninepence out of my slender pocket-money and returned home with three treasures to add to my schoolboy collection.

The first two of these Edison standard wax cylinders did not survive the first World War, when my younger brother had charge of my phonograph and records, but they have since been replaced by Blue Amberols - the Jay Laurier record is with me yet, and the infectious laugh of that old-time music-hall artist has echoed and re-echoed through sixty years and more, and still delights me now

every time I play it; it is usually followed by the same song rendered by Harry Lauder himself on a Pathe cylinder, this one a gift from an old phonograph friend that didn't even cost me 9d.

The trouble in those far-away days of my boyhood was that although records were available in abundance, there was never enough pocketmoney to expend on them. Occasions when I was able to buy three records at one time were rare, and usually followed Birthday or Christmas. Sometimes I would look into a shop-window with longing eyes when a desirable bunch of records was displayed, and wishing fervently that I had some money in my pocket. Sometimes I would have the audacity to go inside and ask for a certain title to be played, saying hopefully, if it is good "I'll buy that one if I can". Then I would go home and make an appeal to Dad for the sum of one shilling, and if I met with a generous response, I would be back at the shop as fast as my legs would carry me.

I recall one such record purchased in those circumstances, an Edison 2-minute wax cylinder No9773 "Her bright smile haunts me still" by the Edison Venetian Trio (violin, flute, and harp) and I am playing this very same record while I write these lines. It is playing with extraordinary clarity, a little wear perhaps, not surprising considering that well over sixty years have passed since the day of purchase. It is still a mellow melody and most nostalgic to me because it brings back happy memories of those halcyon days of my boyhood.

On half-holidays, when not playing cricket or football, I used to walk from our home at Finchley to Holloway (both suburbs of London) where I knew a shop that sold cylinders for $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. This was a brand called LONDON POPULAR - pirated recordings of Edison and Edison Bell cylinders with the name of the artist omitted.

As the years of my boyhood advanced, my collection became augmented by purchases of second-hand cylinders at fourpence each. I bought any I could get, but carefully rejected those that were worn, scratched or had broken threads. Unlike cylinders bought in proper phonograph shops, they would not be played over before purchase. Lower down the social scale was a brand called EXCELSIOR, which, as far as my memory serves, could be obtained free in exchange for three broken records, and I was not slow in availing myself of the opportunity. These records, however, were pretty gastly, and only one of these curiosities is extant in the shelves of my phonograph room today. It is odd that the box in which it is housed, is worth more than the record itself..

These reflections about records could go on almost indefinitely, but I prefer to reflect upon the Society Membership, which is just what I started off with.

What matters most in life are the people you make your friends. Life is full of contradictions, and all personal relationships have double dimensions. One thinks of the people one meets, their features, their laughter, the way they walk and talk, their general deportment and personality.

The act of recognition is the start of friendship. The touch of hand upon hand which inaugurated The return of the Prodigal, and the familiar Society greetings, "How are you old man? It's grand to see you", made me feel that life is finally and utterly desirable, and the World is a grand place in which to live.

THUMB-NAIL SKETCHES NO.49.

by TYN PHOIL

Edison Blue Amberol No 28121 - Paganarie aus "Maskenball" (Verdi)

Soprano solo by MELITA HEIM (in German)

"The Masked Ball", as an opera, is not typical of Verdi. It is one of his early operas, and in treatment more resembles those of Bellini or Rossini. The music is light, frivolous, and frequently seems hardly suitable to the text. Many of the arias are pretty, however, and the brilliant final scene at the Ball, with its dainty dance music tripping along without regard to action of the play itself, has deservedly made it very popular with opera lovers.

The opera was first called "Gustavo III" (after an assassinated Italian monarch) and the scene was laid in Stockholm, but after the announcement of its production had almost precipitated a riot in Naples, Verdi was forced to change the scene to Boston and the name to "Un Ballo in Maschera". Even then, the Naples production had to be abandoned, and the opera was given in Rome.

The jovial part of Oscar, the debonair little page, is always taken by a woman, as it is written for high soprano voice. Melita Heim, a German lyric soprano, sings the aria with great delicacy, and an exquisite sence of the humour it carries.

TWO NORTHERN COLLECTIONS

by GEORGE FROW

No.1. Newcastle-on-Tyne Museum of Science and Engineering.

I recently had the opportunity of visiting two museums in the North of England, and feel that a report on their phonograph and

gramophone content would be useful to those unable to visit them.

The Museum of Science and Engineering in Newcastle has always been well up in my intended visiting list, not so much on account of its talking machine display, which is small, but among its collection of Parsons material can be seen something of the Auxetophone. Sir Charles Parsons, of course, is known particularly for his development of the steam turbine, in fact his steam yacht "Turbinia", the floating testbed for the first marine turbines, is preserved complete in a special hall built around her.

There is a small collection of Auxetophone material in course of arrangement, and overshadowing it, the great snail-like horn (depicted on Page 69 of "Talking Machines", V.K. Chew 1967), which must be eight to nine feet tall; it is made of a heavy metal, and painted green, and I understand that the original sound-box is being renovated by an elderly Parsons employee.

In a nearby glass-case, photographs show this horn applied to a harp, and to a cello, and the development and application of the Auxetophone has been covered in an earlier HILLANDALE NEWS (No. 44 of August 1968, and No. 46 of December 1968) The cello reproducing head was on display, as also an early gramophone head, and an account of Parsons' work on the Auxetophone will follow this article.

Other talking machines in the Museum include an Edison Bell "Commercial" office machine (depicted in the centre page of the Society's 1905 Edison Bell catalogue reprint), an Edisonia "Domestic" graphophone (being the "Eagle" under different feathers), and the "Guinyphone" portable gramophone of the 1920's, and made by Vickers-Armstrong of Dartford, Kent. The specimen on display lacks the cardboard resonator and this model is called a "Polly Portable" in my collection.

Also to be seen is an Edison-type tin-foil phonograph, made by J.H. Holmes, M.I.C.E., M.I.E.E., M.I.M.E., of Gateshead in 1878, and exhibited at a local school jubilee in January 1879. I gathered that J.H. Holmes must have been a very clever practical engineer, as his complete workshop is exhibited in another corner of the museum.

I am indebted to the new Keeper, Mr R. Alastair R. Smith, for telling me something of the museum's history. It was apparently the Palace of Arts, built for the 1929 Newcastle Exhibition, and for an estimated life of six months, ultimately becoming the repository for the City's scientific treasures. Now it is an enormous collection, a clutter of the most fascinating mixture; as Mr Smith

pointed out, there is no storage space to speak of, as there should be in most museums, so everything has to go on show, and some who eschew modern display technique as pandering to the public desire for the brief glimpse and easy viewing, might be heard to murmur "as it should be". After a succession of dedicated part-time keepers, Alastair Smith has become the first full-time officer, and is obviously faced with a Herculean task of sorting, cataloguing, distilling. It would be outside the magazine's scope to list but a fraction of the rest of the fascinating material on display, but one has only to think of some of the district's great names - George and Robert Stephenson, Armstrong, Parsons, Whitworth, Vickers, among many to realise what a wide scope this museum has to cover.

I must confess that a museum that shows nine-tenths of the iceberg is one after my own heart, even if a step-ladder is needed to examine items ten feet up the wall, but I shall certainly be going again.

.....

The Hon. Sir Charles Parsons and the Auxetophone

Through Mr R. Alastair R. Smith's kindness, I now have a photostat copy of the HEATON WORKS JOURNAL for December 1934, in which Sir Charles Parsons' work on the Auxetophone is described in some detail, and a summary of this will no doubt be of great interest to Members. The Parsons Engineering Company's works is at Heaton Junction, near Newcastle, and it was there that some of these experiments took place in what was still referred to in 1934 as 'The Gramophone Shop', a shed next to the Electrical Research Laboratory.

According to this Journal, the earlier work of Horace L. Short was not known to Parsons when granted his two original patents in 1903, no patent search having been made, and Short wrote to say that he had already patented a similar type of valve. Negotiations were begun, and Short readily assented to sell his patents to Parsons for £700 down and a retainer of £400 per annum for 4 years.

Parsons' first patent No. 10468, was taken out in 1903, and covered "Improvements in sound reproducers, or intensifiers, applicable to phonographs, gramophones, telephones and the like". He replaced the conventional diaphragm by a finely-adjusted 'valve' which controlled air supplied under pressure.

The valve itself comprised a stationary grating or valve seat, and a movable grating controlled by movements of the needle. As the needle followed the sinuosities of the groove on the record, the

'valve' moved with it, and this opened and closed the slots in the valve seat through which the air was rushing. The air was therefore given minute pulsations corresponding to the undulations on the record so that sound waves identical to those originally recorded were set up in the surrounding air and reached the ear of the listener. The 'valve' was mounted on a weight bar, rigidly connected to the needle-holder. A box containing a filter ensured that air reaching the valve was perfectly clean, and the valve had to be free from oily deposit.

Sir Charles's second patent was No. 10469, taken out at the same time as the first, and covered "Improvements in and relating to musical instruments". This describes the use of a valve adapted to stringed instruments of the violin family, the harp and pianoforte. Parsons replaced the usual sounding-board or membrane by a valve operated directly by the vibrations of the strings. The valve was substantially as previously described, and on say a violin, was supported from the structure on which the bridge was carried, the sounding-board being removed. On the outlet side of the valve, an expanding trumpet was provided, and it is interesting to note that in order to dampen out scratching and high harmonics, this was lined with velvet.

In a further patent in 1903, No. 23768, Sir Charles Parsons covered the attachment of gramophone needles to sound-boxes, the hole for the needle being diamond-shaped, so that in playing, the needle remained in the hole by pressure of the socket and record, and when not playing a small magnet with aligned poles kept the needle from falling out of the socket.

Other patents taken out by Parsons were:

No. 20892/1904 "Improvements in the relating to reproducers or resonators for gramophones, phonographs, and the like".

No. 8407/1905 "Improvements in relating to sound reproducers".

The first of these patents covered the use of an elastic connection joining the needle and moving parts of the valve. The object of this invention was "to provide means whereby such scratching sounds and changes of tone are got rid of, and a better and more uniform reproduction of the original sound is effected".

The second patent covered the use of a compensating cylinder and piston, which rendered the working position of the valve independent of fluctuations of air pressure. It was found that the mean position of the valve was disturbed by differences or fluctuations of air pressure from the supply, with the consequence that the tone or power of the instrument was thereby adversely affected.

The air valve reproducer, fitted to a gramophone was shown to the Royal Society about 1904, and Professor Johnstone Stoney, F.R.S. suggested naming this type of valve the "auxetophone". Shortly afterwards the valve was exhibited in the Library of the Royal Institution in London, and notices describing its working appeared in the leading papers

So successful was the development of the auxetophone that by 1906 a valve made at Heaton was used on a double-bass at the Queen's Hall, London during that season. This device was greeted with a mixed reception, however, as it was realised that, if adopted, it could reduce the number of string players in an orchestra.

Auxeto-gramophone concerts given in various towns throughout the Kingdom and Empire resulted in world-wide enquiries for this instrument.

In 1906 Sir Charles sold the patent rights for his and Short's patents to the Gramophone and Typewriter Company for £5000, who marketed it both as a horn and concealed-horn Chippendale model under G.&T. and VICTOR trade-marks. He then devoted himself to the application of the device to violins, harps, etc. He spent much time and money in pursuit of these experiments but was so obstructed by the musical fraternity because of possible unemployment as a result of this application, that he subsequently dropped the whole matter.

In "Charles Parsons", by Rollo Appleyard (published by Constable and Company many years ago) the author describes the auxetophone experiments, and a letter written by Sir Charles Parsons to Sir Ambrose Fleming in 1921 gives the history of this invention, and says "I worked on this subject as a hobby in my workshop at home". It is interesting to recall that during this period Sir Charles was deeply pre-occupied with many business problems, for example designs of turbo-alternators for Wallsend-on-Tyne, the method of propulsion and afterwards the steam turbines of the Cunarders "Mauritania" and "Lusitania", and the turbine engines of the Royal Navy's "Dreadnought".

In the same letter to Fleming, who had produced his thermionic or oscillating valve in 1904, Parsons concludes by saying - "I was never able to obtain an actual magnification of the voice by means of an air-valve. Your ionic valve has solved the problem!"

In 1922-23, as again related by Rollo Appleyard, the late A.Q. Carnegie carried out experiments to apply the auxetophone to wireless loudspeakers, by adapting the gramophone type of valve to the ear-piece mechanism of a telephone by coupling the diaphragm, by means of a reed to the movable grating. "The results were superior to any loud-speaker then available", Parsons took an interest in these

experiments, but further work was judged unremunerative as the master patent has expired.

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I feel that these extracts from an article of 36 years ago have revealed a very great deal to us, and has been well-worth quoting in large chunks. Parsons was one of a bunch of independent, industrious, thrusting inventors who managed to build an industrial empire behind them, one that supported a hard-working experimental staff under his leadership, and remind us of Bell, Edison, Berliner, and a lot of others, indeed of Horace Short, who with Col. Gouraud's initial backing did early work on the auxetophone principle, and adapted it to other uses than the gramophone, including a megaphone, or loud-hailer. The fact that Short's work is reported here as apparently unknown to Parsons is a revelation, and I think that Member Charles Cox, who knew Short well and helped in the experiments, was also under the impression that Parsons took up where Short left off.

Mr. Alastair Smith's prompt thoughts in finding this article in the HEATON WORKS JOURNAL, and troubling to send it to me have, I hope, taken us a long way further, and in the next issue of HILLDALE NEWS, it is hoped to cover Edison's earlier work of harnessing air-pressure to sound reproduction.

EDISON RECORDING GROUP PERSONNEL. A further selection by GERRY ANNAND

New York Trio (1928)

Louis Edlin (violin) Cornelius Van Vliet (cello) Clarence Adler
(piano)

New Yorkers (1929)

- Swope, - Preston, Ed. Small, Colin O'More, Harry Donaghy

Oakland Quartet (1912)

Will Oakland, John Bieling, Steve Porter, William F. Hooley.
With Billy Murray added they became the Heidelberg Quintet.

Olivetti Troubadours (1910)

Michael Banner (violin), Roy H. Butin (guitar)

Original Piano Trio (1922)

George Dilworth, Edgar Fairchild, Herbert Clair.

Ossman-Dubley Trio (1906)

(harp-guitar)
Vess L. Ossman (banjo) Audley Dudley (mandolin) George F. Dubley

Palace Trio (1920)

Rudy Wiedoeft (saxophone), Mario Perry (accordion)
J. Russell Robinson (piano)

Philharmonic String Quartet (1928)

Schipione Guidi (1st violin), Arthur Lichstein (2nd violin)
Oswaldo Mazzucchi (cello), Leon E. Darzin (viola)

BOOK REVIEWby GERRY ANNANDA Guide to the Edison Cylinder Phonograph - by George Frow.

Reviewing written books is a thankless task at the best of times, but it is the exception that proves the rule. I refer to George Frow's imminent publication of "A Guide to the Edison Cylinder Phonograph".

I enjoyed every word of this, and read it at a sitting, and so will you. The period covered is 1895-1929, and embraces the spring-driven machines, so it really starts with phonographs that could be bought over the counter.

The first to be quoted is the TRIUMPH; this, the sturdiest of all Edison machines, with its triple-springs, it was capable of almost anything, and many survived long enough to carry a Music Master horn. I can never understand why this robust machine was followed by the underpowered HOME, this was reduced to one spring, yet carried the heavy-type cradle of the TRIUMPH.

The Edison Company admitted that the HOME was unsuitable for home-recording, and with many adapted to play two and four-minute records, their defects are all the more apparent. By contrast, the STANDARD, which followed, was probably the most successful of all Edison machines. Although possessing only a single-spring, the feed-screw by being placed parallel to the mandrel with a much lighter carrier-arm, gave ample power, and took no notice of a 2/4 minute conversion.

The GEM was non-standard in its youth, with its smaller reproducer and key-wind. This at two guineas was intended to make a dent in the flourishing hold of the PUCK, etc. This, it did quite successfully, judging by the number still around. Of course with a GEM you became an Edison owner, and the same as the chap next door with his TRIUMPH. Mr. Frow gives a good dissertation on the hornless machines, and rightly assesses their value as suitable for mounting an aspidistra, grandpa's photograph, or what have you. Edison would never comment on the two types, merely saying it was a matter of taste.

The Model 30 AMBEROLA sums it up nicely, a good flat top and an internal horn little bigger than a cocoa tin. I always think it is a pity that Edisons did not market an EDISONIC, as they did with the Diamond Discs.

There is a fine chapter on reproducers and recorders, even including a Sykes Electrograph. Adrian Sykes told me he was doing electric recording in 1924, a year at least before anybody else. This is a digression however.

The booklet is well illustrated to cover every phase, and at the price is a "must" for everyone interested in Edisonology.

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"A Guide to the Edison Cylinder Phonograph" is published at 18s (soft cover) and 35s (hard cover), plus postage, and may be obtained through Leonard L. Watts. Members are referred to the new catalogue of Society Sales for home and overseas postage rates, dollar equivalents, and other details.

CATALOGUE OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH TWO AND FOUR-MINUTE CYLINDERS
OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE RECORD COMPANY, ALBANY, N.Y.

A compilation by GERRY ANNAND

Reviewed by GEORGE FROW

To allay any accusations of mutual back-scratching between the President and me, I hasten to add that it is absolutely coincidental that we have come up with a book for review simultaneously, and that the necessity of getting quick reviews has perhaps precluded our sending them further afield and holding up an issue of this magazine.

Having therefore attempted to justify these words, I can say quite confidently that this compilation of American and British cylinders from the Indestructible catalogue has long been needed, and we must be grateful to Gerry Annand, not only for listing everything he can find in as great a detail as possible, particularly with regard to composers, but for the first time in any listing I have seen, applying dates of issue to the cylinder numbers. That is something I feel that enhances any such catalogue, and years ago when I toyed with the idea of making an Amberol listing, eventually to find that others were far ahead, the date of issue seemed so important. Play a cylinder to any friend and the first thing he says is "How old is that?" - and few people can give a satisfactory answer.

The catalogue is contained in 46 pages, and a foreword gives the history of the Company and helps our understanding of why these cylinders are found in other boxes than Indestructible; for instance

in Columbia, Federal and Oxford boxes.

The American issues contain all the names so familiar to those au fait with the Edison listing - Collins and Harlan, Ada Jones and Billy Murray, Stanley, Porter, Burr, Belmont and Wheeler, and so many more are there in profusion, and the delightfully-named Indestructible Military Band and Indestructible Symphony Orchestra, while Philip Ritte, Harry Fay, Jack Charman, Billy Whitlock and the ubiquitous Stanley Kirby are among the familiar names on the British lists, as well as several apparent pseudonyms.

We learn that the American Musical Director was John Lacalle, one time first clarinet with Gilmore's Band and after with Sousa, while Albert W. Ketelbey acted similarly in the United Kingdom, and occasionally trotted out piano and organ cylinders.

Most of the Indestructible cylinders were for the popular market, and few, if any, grand opera cylinders can be found, but Members interested in early popular dance music will find some interesting items among the late American numbers.

No collector should be without this listing - its price is moderate and the pages are packed with interesting material.

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"The cylinder Catalogue of the Indestructible Record Company" is available at 5s (plus postage) Further details in Society catalogue.

THE AEOLIAN COMPANY

A Brief History of the Company and its Records

by ROGER COLE

(Editorial comment: These articles on the Aeolian Company and its records by our New Zealand Member, Roger Cole, are published in HILLANDALE NEWS by permission of the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand, and first appeared in their magazine THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD for June 1970. Many people are nowadays taking an increasing interest in the labels of smaller and oft extinct companies, and no doubt complete listings will be issued of many of these in due course, and this article, although covering some record facts unique to Australasia, will also interest machine collectors on account of its inclusion of Aeolian "Graduola" material)

A Brief History of the Company

This American Company first came into prominence as a maker of player pianos and similar instruments. It was an active company with magnificent showrooms and business premises in New York. Operations soon extended to England, and it seems the company must have had immense capital resources, judging from its rapid expansion and almost ostentatious premises.

Although known primarily for its records, variously labelled as "Aeolian", "Aeolian-Vocalion", and later "Vocalion", the company manufactured a gramophone which incorporated a device at the time quite unique. This came about as follows:

Late in the summer of 1912, a Mr F.J. Empson arrived in London from Australia, bringing with him a gramophone into which he had put his patented device for controlling musical effects. Meeting with no satisfaction from those he expected would back his invention, he was on the point of re-embarking for Australia, when a mutual friend persuaded him to take his invention to Aeolian. As we now know, Aeolian grasped at the opportunity, Empson's gramophone was shipped to their New York office, and ultimately the AEOLIAN-VOCALION was born with its "Graduola" attachment. This device gave the operator control of the voice modulation of a singer while sitting in a chair listening to the record, obviating the use of special needles, muted horns, and other attempts at controlling the sound of the gramophone. This attachment consists of a slender flexible sheathed wire cable stretching from gramophone to operator, having a valve device which is pushed in or retracted as desired. This results in movement of a butterfly valve in the machine, which reverses the current of sound in the horn, and thus the sound becomes fainter.

The records marketed by Aeolian followed the machine by some considerable time, at least two years, this being the time spent on background work on the disc prior to its being introduced to the public. Being late on the record-making scene, the full field of really good artists was not available to Aeolian, yet the company managed to find some excellent artists, among them Elena Gerhardt, Evelyn Scotney, Gladys Moncreiff and Frank Titterton (who of Francesco Vada). Children's records, called "Vocalion Midget", and measuring 7 in in diameter, were made in Australia by electrical recording methods, but probably due to the natural destructiveness of children, these are in the rarity class; I have one only, containing five nursery rhymes.

The Aeolian Company's Labels

The earliest records from the Aeolian Company carried the "Aeolian" label, with gold lettering and a red or pink centre. Many of these, if not all, were vertically cut and played with an ordinary needle via a swivelling sound-box, similar to the early Emerson discs. Aeolian discs are most uncommon, and any collector finding one should guard it well.

Subsequent to F.J. Empson's success in 1912 with the Aeolian Company manufacturing the AEOLIAN VOCALION gramophone incorporating his "Graduola" attachment, the name of the disc was also altered, so any "Aeolian" label should be at least pre-1913. On the new label "Aeolian-Vocalion", is to be found much of the popular music of the day, together with some classical and operatic recordings. Along with most recording companies, Aeolian does not seem to have recorded much in the way of serious orchestral works in the early days. I am however the proud owner of a pair of Aeolian Vocalion pink-centre discs, A-0247 and A-0248, whereon Vaughan Williams' "Old King Cole" Ballet Suite is recorded. It is hardly up to the standard of "Nut-cracker"; I retained it for obvious reasons.

At some stage in its history, someone in the Company must have decided that "Aeolian Vocalion" was too long a title, for later discs are simply "Vocalion", and still later ones are further abbreviated to "ACO". The exact date of the abbreviation is uncertain; most probably it was a gradual process, as I have in my collection X-9122 by Ferrera and Franchini, which, on one side is "Aeolian Vocalion", and on the other simply "Vocalion". Discs of both names were produced in several different colours of label, whether there is any significance to a particular colour is uncertain.

I list below the colours I have found, and the type of music found on each colour of label. If any reader can add further information, I would be very pleased to hear it. In all cases, except where stated, the lettering is gold and the disc is of English manufacture. The colour referred to is the basic or predominant colour in the label.

Aeolian Vocalion

10in.	Green	Classical
	Black	Light vocal, popular instrumental
	Blue	Classical instrumental
	Pink	Classical
	Red-Brown	Dance, light classical instrumental

12in. Pink Classical) Both of these are often found with
 Red Operatic) Explanatory Notes on reverse, the
) Red being the more usual

Vocalion

10in. Black Light Vocal, Light Classical Dance
 Blue - large label " " "
 - medium label " " "
 - small label (Australian) Dance
 Yellow small label only (Australian) Light Orch,
 Classical, Light Classical
 Dark Purple A modern, electric type disc with light
 popular music.
 Cream/White lettering on black and gold (American)
 This disc is buff-coloured, similar to some of the
 "Summit" brand, although I have seen the label on
 a black disc. Dance.
 12in, Blue Light Classical

ACÓ

10in. Red, gold lettering On this disc is found all the types of
 music popular in the 20's and 30's

Vocalion Midget This most uncommon Australian label is found on 7in
 children's records Electrically recorded with
 Nursery Rhymes.

The Australian branch of the Company moved into a sphere of activity
 all of its own, in manufacturing records under the "Broadcast" label.
 The types of this label I detail below; again the list is not necess-
 arily exhaustive. (ED.-Broadcast Records were also made in the U.K.)

Broadcast

10in De Luxe, blue Classical, opera, choral. No reference is
 made on this disc to the parent company.
 "Twelve" blue This record, although only 10in. in diameter
 was claimed to play as long as any 12in. disc,
 hence its name. Described on the envelope as
 "The Popular Classic Record". Label bears the
 "Made in Australia by Vocalion (Foreign) Ltd."
 8in. Red General vocal and light classical.
 No reference to parent company.
 6in. Broadcast Junior Dark blue label bearing the words "Electrically
 Recorded, to be played at speed of 80". Also
 "Manufactured by the Vocalion Gramophone Co."

There is a large block about the size of a royalty stamp, but printed on the label with the letters "V.G.C." therein. Light vocal and dance.

The final fate of the Company is uncertain - it may well have fallen to the superior size of a larger company such as Columbia, although I have heard of a Vocalion L.P. being marketed recently. Any further information would be gratefully received.

AT THE WHITE SWAN

The Society's August Meeting reported by

FRANK ANDREWS

The Society's Meeting of August 14th was held as usual at the "White Swan", Tudor Street, E.C.4., when a programme of acoustic and early electrically-recorded discs was presented by Barry Reynaud.

He began almost at the beginning by playing a 7in. Berliner disc, followed by two early electrics, a Columbia of Fred Rich's Orchestra, and Jack Hylton tip-toed us through the tulips.

Subsequent recordings in the first half of the programme were mainly Dance and Jass Bands of the late 20's and early 30's. A Pathe Perfect record of the Pathe House Orchestra played us "Ca c'est Paree", followed by Van Phillips' Band in "Wind in the Willows", and an 8in. Edison Bell of "That's why Darkies were born" gave us the E.B. House Band, probably conducted by Harry Hudson, who was that Company's musical director at that time.

Before the interval we heard two Jass items, "Jass me Blues" by Bix Beiderkeck's Orchestra, and the Wolverines in "Lazy Daddy".

In the second part of the programme, Barry Reynaud opened with two musical comedy selections, "The Geisha" (on a broadcast Twelve) and "Merry Widow" on Edison Bell. These were followed by Jack Hylton playing Chevalier's "Nobody's using it now" and in complete contrast Carusi and Gluck sang the Brindisi from "La Traviata".

Will Perry's Dance Band on Parlophone, followed with "The Broadway Melody" and Eddie Duchin with "I cover the Waterfront" on H.M.V. were forerunners to a Decca record of Edythe Baker's syncopated piano selection from "Nymph Errant".

Another piano disc, this time a recording of a "Fats" Waller piano roll on the London label, came next and brought us to a vocal by a comedienne very popular in this country before World War 2.

Elsie Carlisle, who sang "Ten cents a Dance" on the Imperial label. She recorded also for Decca, Rex, Zonophone, and Dominion, and it has been said that her song "My Man O' War" was put over in such a suggestive fashion that the resulting litigation forced the manufacturers into liquidation.

Barry Reynaud finished his programme with a record by Russ Morgan's Band, which he claimed were the last recording band on 78's that produce a distinctive style of its own.

Quite a number of conversational points were raised during the programme - which was the greater for instance, Formby Senior, or his son, and factions favouring one or the other had their say. Another point rose as to whether different dance bands copied each other's style and arrangements, or whether arrangements were sold as such by publishers; on the subject of surface noise on different makes, mention was made of the columbia laminated "Silent Surface" discs, and on the question of long runs of a particular record over very many years, whether the sound was cleaner and crisper in the earlier pressings.

The report of the September London Meeting will appear in the next issue.

Before entering into any business arrangements with the following Members are asked to get into touch with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

James Gladstone, last address [REDACTED] New York, 10023
or c/o Mr. Mathias, [REDACTED], New York, 10009

Roy Jones, Hall Green, Birmingham.

CALIFORNIAN COUNTERPART.

Only one News-Letter has reached us from the Society of Early Recorded Music in Los Angeles, before going to press. The programmes appear to be reaching a standard where "they are no longer a chore to sit through", which is as frank an admission as has ever come out of a Phono. Society. Sleepers and snorers at meetings using conventional L.P. records are not uncommon, but there's not much time to nod off during the ancient stuff. The cultivation of a wandering, or "sermon" mind, is advocated.

The programmes for the next 7 months are listed, monthly auction sales are reported as brisk, and material seems plentiful. Dick Layman reports that of the founder members, only he, Elmer Moore, and Howard Cole, are left in the district.

MISCELLANY

The October Meeting of the Society will be held at the "White Swan" Tudor Street, London, E.C.4. at 6.45pm on TUESDAY October 13th. This will be the Annual General Meeting, and any questions or items for discussion should be sent to the Officers of the Society before that meeting, Please note again that from October the Society is reverting to the TUESDAY meeting, always the second Tuesday in the month.

.....

George E. Lee reports having found a 2-minute Edison Bell wax cylinder "The Lonesome Pine" by an unannounced singer on No.20366. This number is not in the Edison Bell catalogue prepared by Sydney Carter, and if anyone can identify the singer, would they please write to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Ossett, Yorkshire, England.

.....

At the age of 58, Ernest Lough has retired from the choir of the Temple Church, London. His recording of Mendelssohn's "Hear my Prayer" and "O for the Wings of a Dove" on H.M.V. C.1329 (Victor 35856) is probably encountered by collectors more than any other record, and was made in 1926 by that Choir, under Dr. George Thalben-Ball, with "Master" Ernest Lough as a 14-15 year old treble soloist. The record topped the million mark a few years ago, and is still obtainable in microgroove form. Lough made several other records as boy soloist with the Choir, and just before the last War some 16 baritone songs of his were issued on 10in. H.M.V.'s. He has recounted that long after his boy-treble days were over, he still received toys from kindly souls who never realised he had grown up! He is now engaged in the insurance business.

.....

Following George Woolford's article in June issue, a Member reports having picked up a LUDGATE record. This is Serial No.4908, "H.M.S. Pinafore" Selection, by the Scots Guard Band, an interesting point is that the composer is given as Sir Arthur Sullivan, Born 1842; died 1900, a little bit of extra information often missing from present-day discs, The matrix numbers are 1399 x and 1400 x, engraved by hand, and the printed numbers on the label are G 1399 and G 1400.

.....

Member Jack Jarrett, [REDACTED], Warwickshire, tells us he is launching a new advertising magazine called RECORD ADVERTISER, to replace the now defunct '78 R.P.M.' RECORD ADVERTISER will have a wide scope, embracing the whole spectrum from cylinders, 'Hill-and-Dale', to lateral cut. In addition to advertising, it is hoped to carry news and items of information, when available. Publication will be on alternate months, and full subscription and

advertising rates are available on application.

BOOK REVIEW

Block Catalogue of Cylinders issued by U.S. Phonography Co. 1890-96

When one looks in the bookshelf for a note on the United States Phonograph Company of Newark, New Jersey, it seems that most of the reference books leave this Company alone, their authors not wishing to stick their necks out more than they have to. The late Dr. Deakins certainly referred to this Company as the compiler, Major Gerry Annand tells us, and so do Oliver Reed and Walter Welch, in fact there seems to have been at least two companies operating under that name, but not simultaneously. However it is that Company's operation from 1890-1896 that this catalogue embraces - it appears to have been an Edison distributing subsidiary, and to have come a cropper over the "doubling" or cylinder copying system in 1896.

This is the first 'numberless' block system catalogue that anyone has tackled, and all credit must be given to Peter Betz for getting the original material, and to Gerry Annand for putting it in presentable order.

All the old familiar names are there (plus some others), and I suppose there must be many of us who imagine these artists (quite erroneously, of course) trudging from recording studio to recording studio all those years ago, so often do their names pass before us. These were the very pioneers of the game, Spencer, J.Y. Atlee, Quinn, Myers, Gaskin, Golden, Hunting, all catalogued conveniently into blocks of their own. These were the great days of the Concert Bands too, Patrick Gilmore's and Sousa's Concert Band occupy adjacent blocks. The latter was formed out of Gilmore's Band when he died in 1892; the principals certainly went over.

This smartly-produced little booklet would precede most collectors' cylinders, but it should be on hand for anyone claiming to be a student of the cylinder.

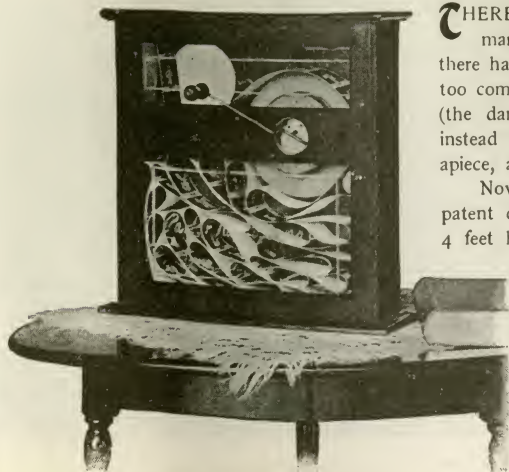
G.F.

Further details in Society Catalogue.

Facing page: Advertisement from an 1897 McClure's Magazine.

Back page: Edison Bell announcement from The Sound Wave, Sept. 1915.

THE PARLOR KINETOSCOPE



THE PICTURES ARE VIEWED FROM ABOVE.

THERE never was a more entertaining device put on the market than the Kinetoscope. But wonderful as it is, there has always been several inherent defects. It is too large; too complicated; far too costly; the pictures are too small (the dancing girl herewith is a sample). It uses the film instead of the photograph. These films alone cost \$15.00 apiece, and the films being frail last but a short time.

Now comes the Parlor Kinetoscope, based on broad patent claims in this country and abroad. Instead of being 4 feet high, it is 12 inches.

Instead of weighing over 100 pounds, it weighs 3 pounds. Instead of using the film it uses the photograph, blue print or half-tone, securing better definition and results in every way. The pictures instead of

costing \$15.00 apiece, cost but \$3.00 per dozen for extra ones. The Parlor Kinetoscope will handle 75 feet of belt containing 600 pictures or objects in motion, no two alike, the motion being reproduced with wonderful fidelity. The belts are of various lengths, adapted to the subjects. These pictures are four times as large as the old Kinetoscope pictures—a very important point. A sample is given herewith, imperfectly reproduced, from our series of Washington views, representing the Chinese minister and his little son out for a walk. If the President and secretary should walk past your door, what a scurrying and craning of necks to get a sight of him! And yet this is one of the series we furnish, with every step and motion faithfully reproduced. We are accumulating a series of views that have no parallel in this country, extending from the Yosemite and its waterfalls to the Atlantic coast and its sea bathers, shipping and ocean views. Our constantly increasing catalogue of subjects by our own corps of photographers also includes stage celebrities and every kind of professional dancing. All this wonderful exhibition of life and motion is reproduced on the Kinetoscope with perfect accuracy. We have also made arrangements with a famous firm of Paris film makers for a list of important foreign subjects.



Furnished complete, in a handsomely polished mahogany case, including six belts, and absolutely guaranteed to work perfectly, \$6.00.



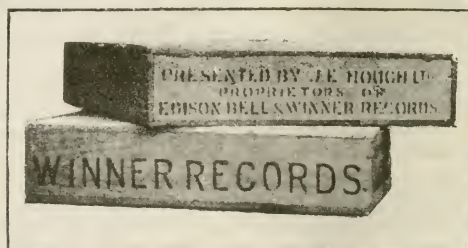
AMERICAN PARLOR KINETOSCOPE CO.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

MORE WINNER RECORDS FOR OUR BRAVE LADS.

The illustrations we herewith print show a consignment of Winner records about to leave the factory of J. E. Hough, Ltd., for shipment to our brave lads in the armies on the Continent. This first consignment, weighing five tons, will be shared between our soldiers in the actual fighting line and those who have been wounded and are in the hospitals in France. Similar consignments are being made to the Dardanelles and to the various camps and hospitals throughout Great Britain. The smaller picture shows two separate cases of discs so distributed. Each contains 24 records and 400 needles.

As nearly every trench, hospital ward and camp has its gramophone, J. E. Hough, Ltd.'s offer to the War Office to supply, free of charge, cases of records to the various units will eventually develop into enormous dimensions. The manufacturers having already anticipated a big immediate demand, have made ready 50,000 discs for the purpose of distribution, and have authorised the War Office to apply for any more that may be required. This magnificent presentation, by-the-by, follows on a similar one of 15,000 discs, to say nothing of machines and needles to His Majesty's North Sea Fleet.



The Sound Wave

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